

GP SUB-COMMITTEE OF NHS Lothian Area Medical Committee

Monday 28th October 2024

7.30pm

MS Teams

Chair – Dr Andrew Forder

MINUTES

Attendees - Dr Andrew Forder, Dr Annie Lomas, Dr Neil MacRitchie, Dr Euan Alexander, Dr Gordon Black, Dr Stuart Blake, Dr Peter Cairns, Dr Michelle Downer, Dr Jenny English, Dr Fiona Ferguson, Dr Rebecca Green, Dr John Hardman, Dr Joanna Loudon, Dr Ramon McDermott, Dr Laura Montgomery, Dr Iain Morrison, Dr Catriona Morton, Dr Rory O’Conaire, Dr Nick Payne, Dr Kim Rollinson, Dr Suzy Scarlett, Dr Joanna Smail, Dr Deborah Strachan, Dr Elizabeth Strachan, Dr Jane Sweeney, Dr Laura Tweedie, Ms Jenny Long, Dr Jeremy Chowings, Ms Alison McNeillage, Dr Hayley Harris, Ms Alisson Stewart, Mrs Nicola Smith

Apologies – Dr Katherine Robertson, Dr Jane Marshall, Ms Tracey Gillies, Dr Hazel Knox, Dr Alexander Kelly

Welcome – Dr Fiona Ferguson, *newly appointed East Lothian representative*

Dr Katy Dudley, *GPST3 Crewe Medical Centre (observing)*

Dr Joanna Loudon, *newly appointed GP Retainer representative*

Dr Tom Green, *GPST3, Braids Medical Practice (observing)*

Chair opened the meeting and warmly welcomed committee members and guests.

1. Minutes of the last meeting 30th September 2024

It was requested that the reference to diabetes be removed from the title of agenda item 6 as, while the medicines being discussed are also prescribed for the management of diabetes, the discussion was specifically around their use as weight management medicines.

Following agreement of this change, the minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

2. Matters Arising / Actions from last meeting;

2.1 - **JC** to share final version of SCA Ratification Process document for information. **Update:** The final version of the document was shared with committee ahead of the meeting for information. As per previous discussions, it was highlighted that the document reflected the recent change to process which introduced the involvement of the GP Sub-committee in future ratification decisions. Committee approved this change. **CLOSED**

2.2 - **Office** to share the proposed “Calls to GPs from SAS Clinicians” document with SAS team to agree and discuss any other points. **Update:** This was done – see agenda item 7.1. **CLOSED**

2.3 – It was noted that under agenda item 8 of the August meeting minutes, “Radiology Wait Times”, it was suggested that the decision to halt locum spend and other waiting list initiatives in Radiology, and the resulting impact on patients was fed back to Scottish Government to provide evidence of the true impact of budget decisions. It was agreed that Jenny Long would check the details of this decision before any next steps were agreed. At the September meeting, it was confirmed that the decision to reduce the additional funding that previously supported locum services in Radiology was agreed through the NHS Lothian Corporate Management Team and Board, and that Scottish Government were aware of this decision and the resulting impact. While the focus is on using the resource and funds available as efficiently as possible, it was acknowledged that there will be a number of service and patient impacts as a result of budget cuts over the coming months and committee’s views on how this might be taken forward were sought.

Noting that the Chief Executive has been invited to a future meeting, it was agreed that it would be a good opportunity to raise at that point.

The issue of whether the public were aware of the impact these budget cuts are having on the level of patient care was raised, and it was accepted that this was discussed at NHS Lothian Board meetings, with the minutes of these meetings being public documents available for all to view.

3. Facilities SLA update

An update on recent activity was provided.

It was noted that the updated Estates SLA contracts are expected to go out to impacted practices soon, with further discussion to follow.

4. Weight Loss Medication Prescribing

Following on from discussions at the September meeting, committee's continued concern around whether this considerable body of work will move to General Practice was noted.

Letters to practices from the Dietetics team asking GPs to consider prescribing off-formulary for patients continue. In addition to setting unrealistic expectations for patients, this is very concerning and there is a significant risk that individual practices who are unaware of the wider position carry out these requests.

The BMA's recent confirmation that this is not GMS work and that appropriate funding would be required before this could be considered within General Practice was highlighted. In addition, it was also acknowledged that the number of patients likely to be eligible to receive this treatment and the cost of the drugs alone will also be a significant strain on NHS Lothian finances.

As a result, committee re-stated their very significant concerns around both the wider financial impact and the impact within General Practice of this area of work, and confirmed that this would not be supported until an agreed policy with the appropriate funding was in place.

Committee requested a clear position statement from NHS Lothian on this work.

5. Unsent Electronic Letters SBAR

A paper summarising the work carried out on unsent letters dated within the last 18 months and proposed approaches for those letters that are more than 18 months old was shared in advance of the meeting.

It was acknowledged that, as considerable time has passed for the letters that are over 18 months old, it is extremely likely that the issues raised within them will now be resolved and they are therefore extremely low clinical risk. Sending all of these letters (44,000) to practices to review and take any necessary action would create considerable administrative work with very limited gain.

It was therefore proposed that, as the risk to patients is extremely low, the advice to NHS Lothian Board is that these letters remain in the secondary care record and are not sent to general practice, meaning they will never form part of the GP record,

Following some discussion, committee confirmed that they were supportive of the proposed approach and acknowledged the confirmation that NHS Lothian Board hold the responsibility and liability for any issues resulting from this approach.

Committee thanked Paul Leonard for the considerable amount of time spent on this issue. It was also noted that a number of system fixes are planned that would mean that the same error should not occur in future.

6. Direct Data Extraction for VLARC and Minor Surgery

A paper detailing the agreed codes to enable direct data extraction for VLARC and Minor Surgery procedures was shared with committee in advance.

The importance of practices using the correct codes in order to receive accurate payment for these items of work was highlighted and practices will receive further information directly about the changes. It was also highlighted that the "Loth ES & Tools" template within Vision+ holds the correct codes for VLARC and Minor Surgery.

Committee expressed their thanks to IT colleagues for their considerable work on this.

7. **Items for Information;**

7.1 – **Calls to GPs from SAS Clinicians**

This was shared with committee in September and following further comment from Scottish Ambulance Service, the final version was brought back to committee for information. It was noted that there is no change to process and that the document is intended to be a helpful reminder of the processes already in place.

AP – Office to circulate the “Calls to GPs from SAS Clinicians” document with the approved September meeting minutes.

8. **GPAS**

The September report was shared with committee in advance of the meeting, and it was noted that the picture is largely unchanged since the previous month.

It was noted that return rates have dropped in some areas and practices were encouraged to continue submitting this important data which helps to evidence the position within general practice.

The continuing funding challenges within practices and their inability to replace leavers was highlighted. In addition, while there is demand for and availability of locums, practices are often unable to fund due to the wider financial challenges, and the risks of locums leaving Scotland and associated loss of training investment were highlighted.

9. **Medical Directors Business**

9.1 – **Representative movements;**

- East Lothian Representative Seat

Dr Fiona Ferguson has been appointed to the extra seat in the Chair’s constituency which will run in parallel with Andrew Forder’s current term as Chair.

10. **AOCB**

10.1 – **Edinburgh Integrated Joint Board (EIJB) Cut to 3rd Sector Grants**

Committee’s extreme disappointment at the recently announced £4.5 million cut to community projects within Edinburgh, with only 90 days notice, was noted. In addition, it would appear that there has been no primary care representation during these discussions. With many people currently using these services, this decision will have a substantial impact on primary care.

AP – Office to discuss possible next steps with regards to EIJB decision to cut £4.5 million of funding to community projects.

Meeting closed.

Date of next meeting - **Monday 25th November 2024 at Novotel Edinburgh Park.**

2024 Meeting Dates (last Monday of each month unless highlighted)

Monday 16th December (3rd Monday)